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Ministry of Forests

NURSERY PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP OPENS OPPORTUNITIES

SALMON ARM – Government has reached an agreement for a private-sector partnership that brings new management to the Skimikin Nursery and an opportunity for new jobs, Forests Minister Michael de Jong announced today.

"Agreements like this one allow us to harness the innovation, expertise and experience of the private sector to enhance and improve the nursery services our forest industry depends on," said de Jong.

"This partnership will create new business opportunities for local entrepreneurs to pursue innovative ideas and create new jobs. At the same time, it allows government to meet our commitment to focus our forestry resources on ensuring effective forest practices, sustainability and environmental protection."

Skimikin Nursery Ltd. bought the government nursery for $1.4 million in a deal finalized Oct. 18. The company is made up of Skimikin Nursery workers and the Outland Group, the largest silvicultural contracting company in Canada.

"The Shuswap is an exceptional location where this new venture can expand and prosper," said Shuswap MLA George Abbott. "The great climate, existing nursery infrastructure and motivated staff lay the foundation for a successful business enterprise, new job possibilities and spinoff benefits in our community.

"It's particularly gratifying to see that the skills and experience gained by Skimikin Nursery workers over the years will stay in the community, where staff can continue producing high-quality seedlings."

Sixteen Skimikin Nursery employees, who hold 60 per cent ownership in Skimikin Nursery Ltd., invested their money to create the new company. The Outland Group, holders of the remaining 40 per cent, owns other silvicultural companies that are active in British Columbia and Alberta in reforestation, juvenile spacing, firefighting and nursery seedling harvesting.

"Our partnership with the Outland Group is a great marriage of tree-growing expertise and business and reforestation know-how," said Skimikin Nursery president Jim Kusisto. "By integrating seedling production into Outland's field operations, we can present a seamless, one-stop-shopping approach to reforestation for our clients."

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The Skimikin Nursery is in the southern Interior of British Columbia on about 45 hectares of land 25 kilometres west of Salmon Arm. The nursery's annual production is about five million seedlings per year of Interior spruce, lodgepole pine, Douglas fir and other tree species. It has also been the primary supplier of grafted spruce and lodgepole pine trees for the provincial tree improvement program.

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Visit the province's Web site at http://www.gov.bc.ca/ for online information and services.

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